

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Members of the Board of Selectmen are collectively the chief executive officer of the Town. As such, we are responsible for setting priorities and managing numerous administrative tasks. On the fiscal side, we work closely with the Town Administrator to ensure that our annual operating budget provides needed services in a cost-effective manner. Finally, we represent the Town's interests in various legislative and regulatory affairs.

The Board of Selectmen featured new faces in 2010. Kathleen Farrell and Ellen Sturgis completed their terms in May, and we thank them for their time and service. Jim Salvie and Charlie Kern were elected to the Board at that time. Long-time Selectman Tom Ruggiero resigned in July, and Tom Ryan joined the board in November after a special election. We thank Tom Ruggiero for his many years of leadership and service to Stow.

Throughout this year of change, the Selectmen focused on the following priorities, initially set in 2009 and supported throughout 2010:

- Obtain water for the Lower Village and Town center (highest priority)
- Increase the Town's affordable housing stock
- Implement the elementary school building project
- Implement the Minuteman Career and Technical High School building project
- Support economic development
- Determine the future use of the Pompositticut School building
- Develop a plan for a senior/community center
- Protect the Assabet River

We regularly tracked the Town's progress against these priorities. To that end, we completed many activities, including the following highlights:

- At a Special Town Meeting, the Town voted to proceed with amending a conservation restriction on a parcel of open space, owned by the Town and located off Deerfield Lane, in order to support a well. After four years of analysis, this parcel appears to be the most likely source of a public water supply for the Lower Village. The Town would not operate a well, but would lease the parcel to a well operator.
- The Selectmen and the Planning Board approved a Housing Production Plan, required under Massachusetts General Law 40B regulations to encourage affordable housing. In December, we submitted the plan to the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for review and approval, and we look forward to having additional control over our affordable housing position.
- Ground breaking for the new elementary school building project occurred in June 2010. The year ended with construction at about 15% completion.
- Town Meeting supported a feasibility study for the Minuteman school building.
- Although moving toward a public water supply in the Lower Village was a big step in support of the Town's economic development, we also approved business and alcohol

licenses, retained a consistent tax rate for business and residential properties, welcomed new businesses in Town, and gave financial support to an existing conditions study for the Lower Village, which will serve as the underpinning for a Lower Village Master Plan being sponsored by the Planning Board.

- We created a Pompositticut Use Study Committee, which identified key potential uses for the building when it becomes available, including a senior/community center.
- We successfully appealed a decision by the Department of Environmental Protection and the Massachusetts Environmental Protection Agency for a NPDES permit modification to allow Marlborough to increase its discharge level of phosphorus into the Assabet River. Although the Phase 2 permits from DEP and Mass EPA were due in fall 2010, no requests for comments or permits have been issued.

Towards the end of the year, the senior/community center plan was identified as one of the key potential uses for the Pompositticut school building, so we combined those priorities into one. We also added as a new priority the provision of additional parking for the Town Building. As we enter 2011, we look forward to reviewing the recently adopted Master Plan and reassessing our priorities in light of the Master Plan recommendations.

We also spent considerable time addressing the following issues that were either emergent situations to which we had to react or unexpected opportunities to advance Town goals:

- The private water company for the Harvard Acres neighborhood, Assabet Water, filed for bankruptcy, and we worked with the Town Administrator and Representative Kate Hogan, Senator Jamie Eldridge, and various state agencies to develop a transition program for homeowners to private wells. Town Meeting supported the adoption of a low-cost loan program, which was authorized by emergency legislation passed in August and enacted by Town Meeting in November. The Town Administrator did a superb job managing implementation of the program. By the end of 2010, the majority of Harvard Acres homeowners had drilled private wells and disconnected from the Assabet Water system.
- We declared the “Blacksmith Shop” located on the Pompositticut School property to be municipal surplus property, and we accepted a bid to relocate it to Shelburne Farm.
- We supported proposed conditions for a superceding order, issued by the Massachusetts DEP, for drawing down Lake Boon as part of a comprehensive weed control program.
- We were actively involved in a variety of transportation activities, including the expansion of a shuttle service to the West Acton train station, obtaining funding and soliciting public input for the design of a portion of the Assabet River Rail Trail on Track Road, and planning for walkways along Route 117.
- We endorsed a hazard mitigation plan for the Town.
- We reviewed a Chapter 61 notification process and sponsored a test run for a Chapter 61 parcel that is going through foreclosure.
- We regretfully accepted the retirement of our police chief, Mark Trefry, and began the process of hiring a new police chief.
- We continued to act upon our goals transparently through our priorities chart.
- We strengthened our relationships with other Town Boards and departments through our Selectmen liaison assignments.

Although the Selectmen have taken on numerous activities to better the lives of Stow residents, we know we cannot act alone. Stow is blessed with an experienced and committed Town Administrator, Bill Wrigley, a dedicated group of Town employees, and many talented residents who step forward to volunteer for numerous boards and task forces, which perform much of the Town's work. The Selectmen appointed members to approximately 20 committees, and we recognize and thank all who volunteered their time and skills to the Town in 2010. We continue to post all available volunteer opportunities on the Town website, and we encourage residents to review it regularly to see how they can participate.

We would like to conclude by offering our most sincere appreciation to all of the residents who contributed their time and effort during the year. The Selectmen and Town employees could not do it without your help. Thanks to you, Stow is a great place to live.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Y. Spear, Chair  
James H. Salvie, Clerk  
Stephen M. Dungan  
Charles Kern

Thomas E. Ryan III

Susan McLaughlin, Administrative Assistant  
Phoebe Haberkorn, Office Assistant

### **TOWN ADMINISTRATOR**

The Stow Town Administrator, by Charter, serves as the Town's chief administrative officer. In this capacity, the Town Administrator manages the day-to-day operations of the Town, functions as its chief fiscal officer, chief procurement officer, chief personnel officer and chief contract negotiator. In addition, this position serves the Town as chairman of the dispatch communications administrative body, as the labor union grievance hearing appeal officer, the sexual harassment officer and the public records management officer. Throughout the year 2010, functioning in these various administrative positions, the Town Administrator managed several significant matters.

At the Annual Town Meeting in May 2010, as has been the case for several years, the Town Administrator recommended a balanced FY 2011 budget that contained expenditure amounts totaling considerably less than the upper limit prescribed by proposition two and one-half.

The FY 2011 municipal budget is a level services budget. More important, the FY 2011 municipal budget of 21,543,118 represents an actual decrease in total spending of 3.2% in comparison to FY 2010. It is important to note that the FY 2011 budget will produce a significant amount of unused levy capacity (i.e. excess taxing capacity). This is very good news for the taxpayer. Essentially, the Town's total tax appropriation for FY 2011 is approximately \$900,000 below the amount it is authorized to appropriate pursuant to the provisions of proposition two and one-half.

Within the total budget, spending for the general operating budget (excluding the schools) increased by 2.7% to \$5,235,405 in comparison to the FY 2010 budget. The Nashoba Regional School District assessment decreased by .2% to \$13,014,640; and the Minuteman Vocational Technical District assessment decreased by 24% to \$609,427. The Town's non-debt capital project budget decreased by 16% in FY 2011 to \$376,000.

The Town's non-capital raise and appropriate special articles budget decreased in FY 2011 by 7.5% to \$323,803 in comparison to FY 2010. Included in the FY 2011 non-capital raise and appropriate special articles budget are annually recurring items such as \$70,000 for the Reserve fund; \$25,000 for legal services and \$10,600 for audit services.

For FY 2011 the Town's annual debt payment increased by 1.7% to \$1,297,693. The annual debt payment budget funds the principal and interest due on bond notes issued to fund the Town's larger capital improvement projects. Currently on the debt schedule are annual debt payments for previous borrowings on capital projects such as the Hale School expansion, the Pompositticut and Center School improvements, the police station facility and the Town Building construction. Also, the Town regularly borrows to purchase some of the more expensive pieces in the rolling stock fleet such as fire engines and ambulances. Finally, the town periodically borrows money to acquire property for conservation and recreational purposes.

Of special note in 2010 relative to the debt schedule, is the fact that the first annual interest only debt payment on the Town's new Center School has come due and payable. The first annual principal and interest payment on this school bond is loaded onto the debt schedule in FY 2012. This significant capital project will have a substantial impact on the Town's annual debt payment during the next 25 years. The Town will benefit from approximately 50% state reimbursement on the total project costs, thus reducing the principal amount bonded long term by the amount reimbursed.

The FY 2011 budget appropriates and transfers \$50,000 from Free Cash to the Stabilization Fund, in a continuing effort to increase the amount of the Town's stored assets. Also, \$200,000 in Free Cash has been provided in FY 2011 to fund a number of non-bonded capital improvement projects. The same total amount of Free Cash was appropriated for the same two purposes in FY 2010.

The Town's Free Cash account is currently certified at \$778,703. This represents an increase of 29% above the amount of Free Cash certified by DOR last year at \$604,198. The Town's Stabilization Fund account balance, including the \$50,000 that was transferred at last May's Annual Town Meeting is \$650,000. Combined, the current Free Cash and Stabilization Fund balance of \$1,428,703 is higher than it has been the last nine years. We are fortunate to be able to continue to grow our stored asset accounts during these difficult economic times.

Looking forward to next year's FY 2012 budget, the Town is facing serious constraints that will require significant adjustments in order to balance the budget. In balancing the FY 2012 budget, it will be necessary to limit recommended total budget expenditures to approximately 4% above the current fiscal year as that is the projected percentage increase in total recurring revenues.

Driving this prediction is the fact that Stow possesses several structural revenue impediments that make it increasingly more difficult to balance annual operating budgets.

Most importantly, the Town's tax base represents approximately 90 percent of the Town's total annual recurring budget revenues. More problematic, this primary recurring revenue source is providing an increasingly larger percentage of the Town's total revenues each year. By comparison, Stow's annual municipal state aid revenue, on average, represents approximately only 3 percent of the Town's total annual revenues. And there is little expectation that this small percentage will increase in the foreseeable future. On the contrary, for FY 2011, Stow's municipal state aid has been cut by 3.5% and we can expect additional cuts by the state in local aid in FY 2012.

The Town's annual local receipts revenues represent approximately 7% of the Town's total revenues. The Town's local receipts revenues have declined each of the last two years; however, there are indications that the local receipts revenues will level off in FY 2012.

It is a distressing fact that a disproportionately high 90% of the Town's recurring revenues come from taxation. This distressing fact is exacerbated by the fact that the tax base is almost completely undiversified. Approximately 92% of the Town's tax base is residential. Ten years ago, residential taxes represented 89% of the total tax base; so the trend line is negative. Further, through various governmental tax reduction programs, approximately 50 percent of the Town's total taxable property is either exempted from taxation or is abated to a significantly reduced rate.

The combined effect of these factors is that the Town suffers from a limited revenue base consisting primarily of property tax revenues and this tax base is essentially undiversified. Stow residential taxpayers receive negligible revenue relief from the contributions generated by the commercial, industrial and personal property taxpayers. And there is no indication that there will be any meaningful future growth in commercial or industrial taxes.

Throughout several months during 2010, the Town Administrator worked closely with other Town officials, as well as many state agencies and elected officials, in an organized effort to assist 175 Harvard Acres residents in disconnecting from the Assabet Water Company water system. As a major part of this effort, the voters approved accepting a 1 million dollar 0% loan from the state Water Pollution Abatement Trust. The Town is utilizing this money to provide 2% interest loans to Harvard Acres residents for the purpose of drilling individual wells. All 175 Harvard Acres residents will need to be disconnected from Assabet Water Company by March 15, 2011, when a federal bankruptcy judge expects to shut down the Company's water system.

Beyond performing functions as the Chief Fiscal Officer, the Town Administrator is directly responsible for directing and managing the Town's legal matters. As it relates to litigation in 2011, there are number of on-going administrative cases. A few lawsuits relate to various ZBA and Planning Board decisions that have been challenged by permit applicants. At the moment there are no significant claims against the Town that expose us to substantial monetary loss.

In August 2010, based on a financial stability credit analysis, the Town was notified by Standard & Poor's Ratings Services that they had reaffirmed our previous year's rating upgrade to AA. The credit upgrade resulted from our discussions with Standard and Poor's analysts and the submission of financial documents and proof that Stow consistently applied financial management best practices. Given the troubling economic climate, this upgrade is significant and timely. The Town will save an appreciable amount of interest costs on our major capital borrowing for such projects as the Center School.

As a regular course of business, the Town Administrator performs a number of management functions relative to fulfilling the responsibilities associated with maintaining a close and productive working relationship with our fire, police, clerical and dispatch unions. For the last two decades, without exception, the Town's four labor unions and Town management have successfully negotiated and abided by all employee labor agreements without ever reaching an impasse or filing for arbitration. This cooperative track record is a tribute to both the Town's union employees and Town management.

Beyond serving the Town's interests and needs by attending to specific management issues such as the matters detailed above, the Town Administrator is generally engaged in regularly attending to matters associated with the day-to-day operations of the Town. In performing these duties, the Town Administrator is regularly in direct contact with most departmental staff and many Town board and committee members. In addition, the Town Administrator frequently works directly with local, state and federal agencies and officials, the public, and various private groups and individuals.

Respectfully submitted,

William Wrigley  
Town Administrator

Susan McLaughlin, Administrative Assistant  
Phoebe Haberkorn, Office Assistant

## **PLANNING BOARD**

A five-member elected board with one appointed associate voting member, the Planning Board has specific statutory requirements. The Board reviews and approves the division of land under the State Subdivision Control Law (MGL c. 41) and the Stow Subdivision Rules and Regulations; serves as a special permit granting authority under the State Zoning Act and the Stow Zoning Bylaw; guides the process of Zoning Bylaw amendments under the State Zoning Act (MGL c. 40A); and adopts a Master Plan that is designed to provide a basis for decision making regarding the long-term physical development of the town MGL c.41).

By statute, the Board is charged with the responsibility of protecting the health, safety and welfare of Stow's residents. Guided by the Massachusetts General Laws, the Stow Zoning Bylaw, the 2010 Stow Master Plan, and citizens' comments and concerns, the Board strives to preserve and enhance the integrity of Stow's character through the use of these regulatory tools, while safeguarding property owners' rights. We recommend and specify changes to



development proposals to achieve these goals. Board members and staff strive to work with both applicants and residents to help shape projects so as to positively affect the impact to the community.

The Planning Department completes the Commonwealth Capital Application on an annual basis. The Commonwealth Capital Policy is a program for promoting better land use choices. Commonwealth Capital endorses planning and zoning measures that are consistent with the Commonwealth's Sustainable Development Principles and encourages municipalities to implement these measures by using state funding as an incentive. Scores from the Commonwealth Capital Application are part of the evaluation process for each grant or loan program.

The Planning Department also tracks building permits for affordable housing units and submits the necessary documents to the Department of Housing and Community Development for certification.

The Planning Department provides GIS mapping services to various town boards and committees.

### **Organization**

At the annual election, Kathleen Willis was elected to a 5-year term. Since she previously served as the Planning Board Chairman, we were happy that voters chose to elect her for another 5-year term.

Following the election, the Board elected Steve Quinn to serve as Chairman, and Lori Clark as Vice Chairman. Brian Martinson was appointed as the Voting Associate Member. The Associate Member's voting power is limited to Special Permit applications, in the case of absence, inability to act, or conflict of interest on the part of any member of the Planning Board or in the event of a vacancy on the Board. Malcolm FitzPatrick, and Donna Jacobs were appointed as non-voting Associate Members. Steve Quinn and Karen Kelleher were designated to endorse ANR Plans (Subdivision Approval Not Required). The Board appointed representatives to various Committees:

Community Preservation Committee: Kathleen Willis

Master Plan Committee: Kathleen Willis

Elementary School Building Committee: Stephen Quinn

Liaison to Zoning Board of Appeals: Ernie Dodd

Liaison to the Board of Health: Kathleen Willis

Liaison to the Conservation Commission: Lori Clark

Pedestrian Walkway Planning Committee: Lori Clark

Lower Village Sub-Committee: Lori Clark

Chapter 61 Study Evaluation Group: Karen Kelleher, Planning Coordinator

Liaison to Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAGIC): Donna Jacobs

### **Development Activity**

The Board received a Petition for Special Permit/Site Plan for approval of four (4) hammerhead lots, as shown on a Plan entitled Highgrove Estates. This Petition is pending a Public Hearing.

The Board approved (2) Hammerhead Lot Special Permits

- Hudson Road, Hammerhead Lot Special Permits
- Randall Road, Hammerhead Lot Special Permits

The Board approved (1) Site Plan for the new Elementary School Building.

- Elementary School Building

The Board approved (1) one ANR Plan (Approval not Required under the Subdivision Control Law):

- Wheeler Road, creating one new lot

The Board voted not to endorse one (1) ANR Plan as it did not conform to the Subdivision Control Laws.

- Property off Barton Road

The Board voted to deny a request for a waiver for a setback requirement at the Derby Woods Subdivision (Sylvan Drive).

The Board approved modifications to the Ridgewood AAN Special Permit:

- To allow the requirement for affordable housing units to be consistent with the Inclusion of Affordable Housing Bylaw.
- Acknowledgment of the State's Permit Extension Act, created by Section 173 of Chapter 240 of the acts of 2010, which allows an additional extension to July 24, 2013 (two years beyond the extension to July 24, 2011, previously granted by the Board.

With the assistance of the Board's Consulting Engineer, Susan C. Sullivan, P. E., the Board reviewed plans and monitored ongoing construction of five (5) subdivisions and two (2) Special Permits:

- Linear Retail – Stow Shopping Center
- Derby Woods I&II (Sylvan Drive and Dunster Drive extension), a 33-lot subdivision, located off of Harvard Road
- Butternut Farm Golf Course
- Arbor Glen Active Adult Neighborhood
- RidgeWood at Stow Active Adult Neighborhood
- Taylor Road Planned Conservation Development

### **Zoning By-laws**

One (1) Zoning Bylaw amendment was brought forth to Town Meeting: To amend the Floodplain/Wetlands Overlay District to reflect Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) 2010 Countrywide mapping format, as required by FEMA, to ensure Stow's continued participation in the National Flood Insurance Program. The proposal was adopted at the May 2010 Annual Town meeting and approved by the Attorney General.



**Master Plan**

The Board reviewed and commented on a draft master plan and adopted the final plan, which will serve as a basis for decision-making regarding the long-term physical development of the town.

**Housing Production Plan –**

The Board voted to accept the Housing Production Plan and looks forward to working with the Stow Municipal Affordable Housing Trust on the implementation plan to provide the necessary tools to provide diversity in Stow's housing stock in a manner that is compatible with the town's historic architectural traditions.

**Appeals**

One (1) five (5) lot Subdivision Plan (River Hill Estates off of Barton Road), approved in 2007, is under appeal pending a decision from Appeals Court.

**Enforcement Issues** – The Board continued to work with the Building Commissioner, property owners and developers on enforcement issues related to compliance with signage, lighting and Special Permit Conditions.

**Fees Collected**

Fees collected in 2010 in the amount of \$2,497.40 offset expenses incurred for processing applications and for miscellaneous copies. The Applicant is responsible for plan review and inspection fees.

**Work Plan**

The Board's work plan continues to include efforts to maintain Stow's rural character, and has taken large steps in its planning goals for Lower Village. In addition, they have made great strides with walkway/sidewalk planning, and continue ongoing assessments of the Town's future land needs, updating Rules and Regulations and the Zoning Bylaw, light pollution/signage issues, and affordable housing. The Board also continues to keep abreast of proposed changes to Massachusetts General Law such as proposed Community Land Use Reform and Partnership Act, as well as grants and technical assistance opportunities.

Lower Village – The Board retained the services of Coler & Colantonio, Inc. to establish an existing conditions base plan and to evaluate the previously proposed traffic alternatives of the 2006 Lower Village Traffic Study, prepared by Fay, Spofford and Thorndike. Phase I of this project is to prepare an existing conditions survey plan showing topography, right-of-way, monuments, pavement, curb cuts, utility covers, walks, walls, fences, curbing trees, building corners, entrance elevations, road cross-sections, and utilities. The Board will seek additional funding in 2011 to move forward with Phase II, to evaluate the preferred traffic alternatives outlined in the 2006 Lower Village Traffic Study, identify constraints and opportunities, and propose recommendations.

The Lower Village Sub-Committee continued its efforts towards implementation of a standard streetscape in the Lower Village and is now preparing a final report, including a recommended action plan to implement its vision: "Our goal is to create an identity for our historic Lower

village, consistent with the rural character of Stow. By addressing visual, functional and safety issues through a public-private partnership, we seek to enhance the Lower Village as the vital business center of our community.”

In 2010 the Lower Village Sub-Committee:

- Performed an informal traffic speed survey
- Established a design for permanent traffic islands
- Established a Gateway sign design
- Updated the Standard Streetscape Specifications
- Sponsored the annual Spring Clean Up day
- Kept abreast of the Board of Selectmen’s efforts for a public water supply
- Began working on the Lower Village Common Improvement Plan
- Provided input to the Planning Board

Thanks to the Highway Department for completing the installation of walkways along Pompositticut Street to the Maynard town line. This will foster pedestrian traffic to the Lower Village.

Walkways - In 2010 the Walkway committee formulated a plan for a two-phase approach. They created an informational brochure, had two public forums to gather input and feedback from citizens, and wrote several newspaper articles. They hired and contracted with a local engineering firm to design walkways along Route 117 for Phase I. They were completed to the 75% level by year’s end. An inventory of the existing walkways in Stow was developed in preparation for Phase II prioritization, and with input from the community, further developed a prioritization scheme for future walkway projects.

Light Pollution - The Light Pollution Sub-Committee continued working with developers, property owners, the Planning Board and Building Commissioner to ensure compliance with the lighting bylaw adopted in 2007. The Sub-Committee continues to urge residents and business owners to confine their lighting to their property by re-aiming or replacing fixtures to achieve better lighting that is not bothersome to others.

In addition, the Board created a FAQ outlining key aspects of the lighting bylaw as well as the Town’s sign bylaw to help residents and businesses comply with the Bylaws.

Zoning and Land Use Considerations – The Board continues to explore new zoning and land use regulations such as design guidelines, Form Based Zoning, Stretch Code, and Affordable Assisted Living Facilities.

Zoning Maps -The Planning Board requested mapping services of Aerial Survey and Photo, Inc. to digitize Wetlands/Floodplain Overlay District, as defined by IEP (Interdisciplinary Environmental Planning) Wetlands Map; the Assabet River Technical Report; the Flood Plain - Plan and Profile Heath Hen Meadow Brook study; and the Middlesex County Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM).

Water Resource Monitoring- The Board contracted the services of Jay Billings of Northeast Geoscience Inc. (NGI) to advise the Planning Board on potential requirements for Water Quality Monitoring at Golf Courses. They reviewed chemical application reports from existing golf courses and plan to make recommendations to the Board on appropriate ways to move forward.

### **Regional Planning**

The Board also continues to keep abreast of regional activities. Board members and staff frequently attend meetings of the Massachusetts Association of Planning Directors, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), and Minute Man Advisory Group on Interlocal Coordination (MAGIC), a sub-group of MAPC, serving the communities of Acton, Bedford, Bolton, Boxborough, Carlisle, Concord, Hudson, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Maynard, Stow and Sudbury.

### **Thanks**

None of the planning efforts would be possible without the enormous contributions by Stow residents, who serve as volunteers on the boards and committees and Town staff. It is a pleasure to continue working with all of you.

The Board extends a special thanks to:

Our very capable professional consultants - Susan Sullivan of Places Associates, Inc. and Town Counsel, Jon Witten, of Daley and Witten, LLC.

The Highway Department for their cooperation in implementing our Lower Village Planning efforts.

Lower Village Sub-Committee - Chairman Don McPherson, Bruce Fletcher, Karen Kelleher, Barbara Sipler, Laura Spear, Russ Willis, Phil Moseley, Brian Martinson and Lori Clark.

Light Pollution Sub-Committee - Chairman Russ Willis, Bill Chiarchiaro, Greg Troxel, Victoria Fletcher and Margaret Tucker.

Pedestrian Walkway Planning Sub-Committee – Chairman Kristina Wile, Martha Monroe, Lori Clark, Joelle Spear, James Salvie and Associate Members Daisy Dearborn and Phyllis Fitzsimmons.

The Master Plan Committee – Chairman Marcia Rising, Karen Kelleher, Kathleen Willis, Charles Kern, Stephen Dungan, Rebecca Mattison, and Roy Miller. Consultant Michelle Ciccolo and Nancy West of The Ciccolo Group. Also, Planning Board staff, Karen Kelleher and Kristen Domurad provided a great amount of support to the Master Plan Committee. Kristen Domurad's outstanding mapping skills were invaluable to the Committee.

The Stow Municipal Housing Trust – Chairman, Donna Jacobs, Mike Kopczynski, Quince Papanastassiou, Trish Settles, Cynthia Perkins, and Laura Spear. Consultant Karen Sunnaborg of Karen Sunnaborg Consulting.

As can be seen by this report, the Board had another busy year, but this amount of work would never have been possible without the tireless and outstanding efforts of Karen Kelleher, and Kristen Domurad, who not only work diligently for the Board, but also for other Town Boards and Committees and the general public with whom they interact on a daily basis.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen Quinn, Chairman  
Lori Clark, Vice Chair  
Kathleen A. Willis  
Ernest E. Dodd  
Leonard H. Golder  
Brian Martinson, Voting Associate Member

Malcolm FitzPatrick, Associate Member  
Donna M. Jacobs, Associate Member  
  
Karen Kelleher, Planning Coordinator  
Kristen Domurad, Administrative Assistant

## **CONSERVATION COMMISSION**

The Conservation Commission consists of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen to administer and enforce both the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and the Town of Stow Wetlands Protection Bylaw and associated regulations. Areas subject to protection under these regulations include wetlands, rivers, streams, other water bodies and their banks, and flood plains, among others. In addition to these resource areas, the Commission must review and if appropriate, stipulate conditions under which proposed activities within 100 feet of the resource or 200 feet of ponds and streams must be conducted. The Commission also works to manage over 1,200 acres of conservation land throughout the community and a network of trails on these lands, and to protect additional high priority lands. Trail maps and permit applications are available in the Conservation Commission office, which is located in the Town Building.

Currently, the Commission consists of seven members with varied backgrounds and a common interest in environmental issues. In addition, we have the strong support of several associate members who work on special projects, such as wetland delineation, drainage issues, trail mapping, forestry management, community gardens and open space planning. Additional support comes from our full-time Conservation Coordinator, part-time Secretary and part-time Conservation Land Steward.

### **Conservation Land Updates**

**Land Preservation:** Pulte Homes of New England, LLC, transferred Title to Open Space Parcel B, a 20-acre parcel of land currently in agriculture located at Arbor Glen on Hudson Road, to the Town of Stow. The Conservation Commission will continue to manage the parcel for agriculture.

**Land Maintenance:** Permits were issued for guided walks and educational activities featured at several of our conservation properties. The walks are sponsored by the Stow Conservation Trust and serve to familiarize participants with the trails and natural resources unique to the area.

There were numerous instances of trees down across trails after snow and high winds; the Steward removed the obstructions and potential hazards from Marble Hill, Gardner Hill, Heath

Hen Meadow Brook Woodland and Flagg Hill Conservation Area. Seasonally, trail entrances are mowed at Wheeler Road and Gates Lane for improved access to Spindle Hill; Orchard View trail connection; Lanes End; Heritage Lane; and at Pompositticut School for Marble Hill. The meadow located on the Woodhead parcel of Flagg Hill is mowed annually to enhance the habitat for Eastern Bluebirds and other open meadow species of birds and animals.

You can help preserve the beauty of our lands by reporting acts of vandalism, regulation violations, downed limbs or trees, and any other potential hazards or concerns to the Conservation Commission at 978-897-8615. Thank you in advance for your help and cooperation.

**Community Gardens:** In 2010 the Stow Community Garden grew to eighty-three garden plots. At the request of some of our gardeners a field was prepared containing twenty-six plots for perennial gardens. These plots can be used to grow perennial and annual vegetables, flowers, herbs and non-invasive berries. The care and maintenance of these plots are the responsibility of the individual gardeners. Seventeen of these plots were rented by returning gardeners in addition to their annual plots. A third pitcher pump well was added to provide water for the new field.

Most of the gardeners who rented annual plots returned to their same plots this year and new gardeners joined us. The annual field was plowed and harrowed this spring in preparation for planting and rent stayed the same. Four 30x50 plots were grown for the Stow Food Pantry and donations were given by other gardeners. In 2011 three 30'x50' plots and two 30'x25' plots will be added and are already spoken for.

### **Public Hearings**

Hearings for residential construction, wetland delineations/resources and restoration projects as a result of enforcement action continued at a brisk pace, including Harvard Acres well permits, Lake Boon Drawdown and Herbicide Treatments for weed management, review of plans for the Center School Project, a subdivision off West Acton Road, and several small applications for home improvements and septic repair. Commission members continued their participation in several town-wide planning projects, including updating of the Master Plan, Center/Hale School expansion, Assabet River Sediment & Dam Removal Study, Open Space Committee and Community Preservation Committee.

The Commission held 42 public hearings for projects during the year. A total of \$3,522 was generated for the Town by these hearings and applications. License Agreements, Community Garden fees, Regulations for Wetland Protection Bylaw, Trail Guides, copy fees and donations also generated \$1,170.

### **Cooperative Efforts and Long Range Planning**

Work plan priorities for the coming year include but are not limited to revisions to the Wetland Protection Regulations, baseline monitoring for conservation restrictions, vernal pool education and invasive species identification. The commission also works collaboratively with local conservation organizations including the Stow Conservation Trust, and Sudbury Valley Trustees on both land protection and land management issues.

The Conservation Commission has assisted the Stow Conservation Trust in drafting a conservation restriction for the open space parcel of the Derby Woods subdivision off Harvard Road and for the Corzine Woodlands. Once approved and accepted by the Board of Selectmen and the Secretary of Environmental Affairs, the Conservation Commission will accept title of the open space at Derby Woods. The Commission is also currently involved in working with the Board of Selectmen to advance an effort to place a water supply well on a conservation land parcel off Deerfield Lane and assisting with securing the necessary approvals to allow this to happen.

In 2009, the Commission joined the SuAsCo Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA), a group of like-minded conservation professionals and volunteers to be part of collaboration in the management of invasive species control issues. By joining this cooperative effort, Stow will have access to a network of expertise and labor as well as funding that is obtained by CISMA for regional invasive species control efforts.

### **Administration**

Becky Mattison is the liaison to the Master Plan Committee and Kathy Sferra is the Commission's liaison to the Community Preservation Committee, and Open Space Committee.

In 2009 the Selectmen appointed Ingeborg Hegemann Clark and Rebecca Mattison as Stow's representatives on the Study Coordination Team for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers Assabet River Sediment and Dam Removal Feasibility Study, and assisted in submitting comments to the Army Corps on behalf of the Town.

Bruce Trefry is the Commission's Land Steward and the Parcel Steward for Flagg Hill Conservation Area and Heath Hen Meadow Brook Woodland. Bruce provides overall management of the town's conservation lands and does an outstanding job for the Commission.

Joyce Bunce is the Steward for the community gardens at the Captain Sargent Conservation Area on Tuttle Lane. She is also a member of the Stow Garden Club. Joyce has done a wonderful job coordinating participants, laying out plots, educating the gardeners on organic farming and providing fresh vegetables to the Stow Food Pantry.

Maureen Trunfio is the part-time secretary assisting with daily operations of the Conservation Commission office and attends to the Commission's needs when called upon. Maureen is in the process of getting her certification in Fundamentals for Conservation Commissioners from MACC.

Pat Perry's consistent management of daily operations is outstanding. We all thank Pat for her efforts. Thanks to her hard work, the Commission has maintained and improved its high standard of professionalism in its interactions with town residents, other town boards and commissions, and state regulatory and enforcement bodies. As we add more conservation land to that already under management by the Commission, and as development activity in Stow continues at a steady pace, it becomes more and more important to coordinate the activities of the Commission with other town boards and effectively maintain required documentation. Pat



continues to do an outstanding job in her role of coordinating daily operations and the successes of the Conservation Commission are due in large part to her dedication and effort.

The Commission benefits from working with town departments, land trusts, associate members and the community. Your input and assistance are invaluable to the Commission. **THANK YOU!**

If you have an interest, expertise or experience in conservation or environmental protection and would like to be a member, an associate member or volunteer, please call the office at 897-8615 or attend a meeting. Meetings are generally held on the first and third Tuesday of every month.

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca Mattison, Chair  
Kathy Sferra  
Helen Castles, Vice Chair  
Douglas Moffat  
Ingeborg Hegemann Clark  
David Coppes  
Bruce Trefry, Associate

Dwight Sipler, Associate  
Stewart Dalzell, Associate  
Joyce Bunce, Associate  
  
Patricia Perry, Coordinator  
Maureen Trunfio, Secretary

## **BOARD OF HEALTH**

As the local permitting authority responsible for the health and safety of Stow residents, the Board of Health continues its service to the Town by insuring that our water, sanitation, habitation, and environment continue to meet the high standards set by those early pioneers who recognized that good health practices create positive outcomes for people and the environment.

### **Medical Reserve Corps (MRC)**

During 2010 we continued our work with the Medical Reserve Corps and Fire and Police Chiefs, on the Town's Emergency Planning Program. Money from Emergency Preparedness grants distributed by the Department of Homeland Security comes to the Town through the MRC to allow planning, purchase, and storage of materials necessary in case of a natural or manmade disaster. This year we also received Federal grant money to support our H1N1 "swine flu" clinics.

In November we held our regular seasonal flu clinic. This clinic is run as a drill to test our Emergency Dispensing Site plan under the direction of the Department of Homeland Security. The town receives funds to help produce the plan and run the drills. 316 people attended the clinic and received both H1N1 and regular flu in one inoculation. We wish to thank all of the MRC volunteers who stepped forward to help prepare for and run these clinics. We couldn't have done it without them and their willingness to donate their time and effort in helping this program run so well is much appreciated.

### **Public Health Nurse**

In 2010 our public health nurse, Brooke James, resigned and our new nurse is Linda Cullen. Linda has stepped in to ably fill this position. Town residents can connect with Linda every Wednesday from 9 AM to 12 PM. Her office is located on the third floor of the town building. She provides home visits, follows up with communicable disease reporting, helps with the clinics that the Board runs, interfaces with the Council on Aging and offers immunizations to town employees as needed. We welcome Linda, who continues to provide a valuable and much needed service to the town. The Board appreciates the support it has received for this program from the residents of Stow.

### **Hazardous Waste and Recycling**

The Board collaborated once again with Stow Boy Scout Troop 1 in the spring of 2010 to advertise the electronics collections they were organizing. We encouraged the Town Municipal Offices to recycle many old computers and parts out of the Town Building where they were stored, and donated money from the hazardous waste fund to the Boy Scouts for taking all of this old equipment. This worked well for us, as the intent of the program is to safely dispose of this material. We continue to offer battery and mercury thermometer collections during our daily office hours. Our hazardous waste collection day in October served 137 households and we intend to offer another collection day in 2011.

### **Loss of a Public Water Supply in Harvard Acres**

2010 saw the Assabet Water Company announce it would cease operation. All of the homes in Harvard Acres were affected by this and the Board was faced with the monumental task of assuring that all of the homeowners would be able to install private wells on individual properties. We worked with the residents of Harvard Acres, the Building Inspector, the Town Administrator, the Department of Environmental Protection and many volunteers to create a plan that would enable this project to move forward in a very short time period. 188 homes were affected and each one required having a property plan, a well drilled, piping trenched, new electrical connections and comprehensive water testing done. The Town Administrator is responsible for a loan program that was created by the state and town to assist those homeowners who need some financial assistance in this endeavor. The program is almost complete and by March 15, 2011, every home will have its own water supply. This was a huge job and the Board of Health thanks everyone who stepped in to help us move this project to completion.

### **Mosquito Control**

The Town of Stow continues to belong to the Central Massachusetts Mosquito Control Project to provide control of this pest, which is a carrier of such diseases as Equine Encephalitis and West Nile Virus. The Project is committed to an Integrated Mosquito Management Program, which utilizes a variety of control techniques and evaluation procedures. The first and most permanent method is called water management, source reduction or wetlands restoration. The second method is called larviciding and the third method is to attempt to control the adult mosquito by spraying on a **request-only** basis. The presence of adult mosquitoes is confirmed before any application is done. All control efforts are undertaken only after surveillance data has been collected and analyzed. This allows control decisions to be made based on the exact need that exists at each specific site. Environmental considerations are paramount when prescribing

various control techniques. The Project's goal is to provide effective and environmentally sound mosquito control, reducing mosquito annoyance and the potential for the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases.

### **Animal Control**

The Animal Control Officer and the Animal Inspector continue to provide excellent coverage throughout the town with the ability to respond quickly to any situation. The following is a report of activity for the year 2010:

Dog Complaints 99	Cat Complaints 6	Wildlife Calls 53
Lost Dogs 46	Found Dogs 36	Cruelty/Neglect 2
Dead Animals on Roads 56	Lost Cats 25	Found Cats 26
Dogs Returned to Owners 16	Dogs Impounded 14	Livestock Complaints 10
		Other 82

Citations Issued		
Written Warnings 8		
\$25.00 Fines 10	\$50.00 Fines 3	

The following is the annual livestock count:

Cattle 42	Llamas 5	Goats 51	Pigeons 21	
Swine 2	Alpacas 9	Sheep 33		
Rabbits 36				
Equine 128	(Horses-102, Ponies -25, Donkey-1)			
Poultry 415	( Chickens- 355, Turkeys-2, Waterfowl- 33, Gamebirds- 25)			

Quarantines are as follows:

Dogs: 10 Day Quarantine	Cats: 10 Day Quarantine
4- Dog bite/scratch to another dog	6- Cat bite/ scratch to a person
10- Dog bite/scratch to a person	

### **Permitting & Revenues**

Revenue of \$33,372.00 was remitted to the Town. The following is a list of permits issued:

Bed & Breakfast-4	Ice-2	Pools-2
Pet Shop-1	Septage Haulers-9	Title 5 Inspections-83
Installers-27	Camps-5	Wells-193
Food Service-68	Rubbish Haulers-5	Tobacco-5
Cider Mill-3	Stables-23	Dumpsters - 12
Disposal Works Construction Permits- 41		

The public is invited to visit our office in the Town Building to learn what information we have available on public health, the environment, hazardous materials, and recycling. As always, we encourage you to call or visit if you have any questions, problems, or concerns. We are open from 9AM to 5PM Monday through Friday and by phone at 978-897-4592. Don't forget to visit

us on the Town of Stow website. We post our meetings and information on special issues on this site. Visit us at [www.stow-ma.gov](http://www.stow-ma.gov).

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia B. Rising, Chair  
Betty Cormier  
Sylvia Daley  
Theora S. Cole, Administrative Assistant  
Cynthia Colosi, Administrative Assistant

Lynn Fishman, Clerk  
John P. Wallace, Health Agent  
Susan Latham, Animal Control Officer  
Phyllis Tower, Animal Inspector

### **ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS**

The Board of Appeals had an unusual year with two applications for Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit and two for amendment of previously granted Chapter 40B Permits. The first were filed by Stow Elderly Housing Corp. for Plantation II, 37 units of supportive housing, and for amendment of the Plantation I permit for the adjacent Plantation Apartments off Great Road. The hearings were opened in August and closed a month later. The Chapter 40B Permit and the amended Plantation I permit were granted in November after extensions for filing beyond the 40-day period required by law. The decisions are currently under appeal by an abutter.

The second Chapter 40B applications were filed by Stow Community Housing Corp. in late July for 30 family housing rental units, Pilot Grove II, off Warren Road and for amendment of the Pilot Grove I permit. Those hearings were closed in October and, with extensions, the decisions granting both permits were filed in December.

Other unusual business before the Board included four separate filings in March by the Stow Elementary School Building Committee for variances related to the Center-Pompo School construction project. All were granted.

- Hearings for Variance: 10 - all granted.
- Hearing for Special Permits: 7 - all granted
- Hearings for Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permits: 2 - both granted
- Hearings for Chapter 40B Comprehensive Permit Modifications: 2 - both granted

The year ended with the Board continuing to hear the application for variance filed by Star Tower Co. and T-Mobile Northeast to allow a cell tower on the Wedgewood Pines Country Club property off Harvard Road. The hearing opened in September, was closed in January 2011 and resulted in a denial.

The Board once again bade farewell to a long-time member. Art Lowden retired and moved from Stow after serving for almost 40 years. His wise counsel is greatly missed.

The Board of Appeals meets on the first Monday of each month, as needed, in the Town Building. Applications may be obtained from the Town Clerk's office or the Town's web page. Information regarding procedure may be obtained by contacting Catherine Desmond, Secretary to the Board.

Respectfully, submitted,

Arthur R. Lowden, retired  
John Clayton, Jr., Clerk  
Edmund C. Tarnuzzer, Jr.  
Michele L. Shoemaker  
Charles A. Barney, Associate  
Lee Heron, Associate

William F. Byron, Jr., Associate  
Bruce E. Fletcher, Associate  
Ruth K. Sudduth, Associate  
Andrew J. DeMore, Associate  
  
Catherine A. Desmond, Secretary

## **TOWN SERVICES**

### **AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION**

The Stow Agricultural Commission is charged with maintaining the viability of agriculture in Stow. This includes advising other Town boards on matters pertaining to agriculture, resolving conflicts between agriculture and residential uses, and promoting agriculture in town.

Residents are reminded that Stow has a right-to-farm bylaw, which reiterates State laws in our Town Bylaws. As part of this bylaw, we provide a notification form for use in transfers of property that lets people know that farms are active in Stow.

The Stow AgCom is working on an inventory of farms in town. At present we have a list of more than 20 families involved in agriculture. If you have a farm you want to be included in our inventory, please contact us. We can be contacted by mail at the Town Offices, 380 Great Road, or through our website <http://stowagcom.org>, or through the Agricultural Commission page on the Town website <http://www.stow-ma.gov>.

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Martin-Sullivan  
Liz Painter

Dwight Sipler  
Kathy Steege

## **BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

The Building Department issued a total of 255 Building Permits in 2010. We inspected the construction of the Center School Phase I foundation and utility work, commercial expansion, new homes, kitchen & bath remodeling, home additions and wood & pellet stoves. Construction at Arbor Glen was completed, but Villages at Stow and Derby Woods continued at a steady pace. In the Lower Village, construction of the Shaw's Supermarket Addition and the Red Ginger